Flawless and Effective Storage of Ammunitions

503. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the frequent spurt of fires in ammunition depots in Bharatpur, Birdhwal, Pathankot and many other places have revealed that our defence planners concentrated more on modernisation of weapon systems and contemptuously ignored the safety standards of ammunition depots and the existing storage regulation are being regrettable observed more in breach; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to appoint any authority to frame fresh regulation for flawless and effective storage system?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Safety standards and storage regulations as enumerated in various orders are being strictly implemented. This process is being regularly checked by functionaries at all levels. However, there is a need to update store houses to store ammunition since some quantity of ammunition is stored on linths in the open. The necessary allotment of funds has been made and by 2004 all ammunition would be under proper storage in Explosive Stores Houses.

The present system is adequate and there is no proposal to appoint any other Authority to frame fresh regulations for this purpose.

Fire in Cochin Shipyard Ltd.

504. PROF. A. LAKSHMISAGAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a fire broke out recently in a support vessel of the Indian Navy's submarine undergoing major overhaul in the Cochin Shipyard Limited killing some persons;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what is the outcome of the inquiry conducted by Government into the incident stating whether any sabotage is suspected; and

(d) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a)Yes, Sir.